



**Testimony**  
**Supporting the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women**  
**Connecticut Women's Health Campaign**  
**Appropriations Committee**  
**February 11, 2009**

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**Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut**

I am here on behalf of Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, and as a member of the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign Executive Committee of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). I support PCSW and the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign as the preeminent voice advocating to insure that the health care needs of women are addressed.

I have been involved with the Women's Health Campaign for over five years, first participating in their work when I was Chapter Programs Director at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and now, for the past three years while employed at the Universal Health Care Foundation. The current and previous Executive Directors of PCSW, Teresa Younger and Leslie Gabel-Brett have both served on our Foundation's Board of Directors. They each contributed an invaluable perspective to our work to achieve quality, affordable health care for every resident of our state.

Health is one of the three priority issue areas of PCSW. Women face significant challenges in the health care arena. In addition to having distinct health care needs such as reproductive health, they are more prone than men to have chronic conditions requiring ongoing treatment. Women are also overwhelmingly the caregivers for parents or children with health problems or disabilities. As reported by the National Women's Law Center, women are more likely to need and use health services, but on average have lower incomes than men. Women with insurance face higher out-of-pocket costs than men as a share of their income. They are more likely to put off needed health care

expenditures and to more frequently incur medical debt. They also have less access to employer-sponsored insurance and are more likely to rely on government health care programs.

The Connecticut Women's Health Campaign is a broad coalition of groups committed to working for the health and well-being of Connecticut women and girls over their life span. Their mission includes achieving access to health care for all women and girls and promoting awareness of women and girls' health care needs. They have been and continue to be a strong advocate for universal health care, assuring that any legislation passed addresses the specific needs of women. Their role in this debate is essential. They also continue to work on other key women's health priority areas such as:

- Breast and cervical cancer screening and detection
- The Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled
- Women's behavioral health services
- Elimination of health disparities

Universal Health Care Foundation fully supports the work of PCSW and of the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign. We all benefit in our state from their leadership in protecting and promoting women's health issues. Please continue to fund this organization that is so crucial to our state's health and well-being.